

REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Robert Thomas, Chair
Commission Conference Room
Suite 1301, 1401 Arch Street
24 February 1998

Present

Robert Thomas, Chair
Penelope Batcheler
J. William Cornell
Herbert Levy
Suzanne Pentz

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Randal Baron, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer
R. Scott Jacob, Executive Secretary to the Commission
Kristin Fetzner, Historic Preservation Planner
Elizabeth Harvey, Historic Preservation Planner

Also

Emanuel Kelly, Kelly, Maiello Architects
James Karmolinski, Kelly, Maiello Architects
Daniel Di Mucci, Pennoni Associates
Kay Smith, Manayunk Development Corporation
Joseph Matassino, Manayunk Development Corporation
Stephan White
Stephanie Craighead, Fairmount Park Commission
Thomas Kline, Fairmount Park Commission
Michael Thompson, City Planning Commission
Myles Pettengill Jr., Archway Associates, Inc.
Paul M. Curci, City Paper
William Giesey
John Connors, Brickstone Realty
James Platt, Burt, Hill, Kosar and Rittelman Architects
Patrick Dewey, American Fidelity Products Company
Margaret MacLaren Ulrich, Center City Residents Association
Wesley Wei, Wesley Wei Architects
Livia Salandria Corman
Robin Kohles
Paul Richardson
Linda Richardson
Arlene Matzkin, Friday Architects
Miguel Fernandez, John Milner Associates

Mr. Levy, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:30 P.M.
Mr. Thomas, Chair, arrived at 1:40 P.M.

1801 Vine Street, Family Court
City of Philadelphia, Owner
Emanuel Kelly, Architect/Applicant
DATE: 1939-41
PROPOSAL: Landscape, parking area

This proposal involves landscaping and parking areas. Emanuel Kelly, architect for the project, described plans to re-landscape the various planting areas, to reinstall shade trees around the building, and pave an existing lawn along 18th Street for additional parking. The proposed parking area will abut the stone base of the building. Mr. Kelly intends to install bollards to protect the base of the building from parking cars. He described them as eight-inches in diameter, concrete-filled, capped, and painted dark green. Mr. Levy suggested using bollards also to protect the grassy areas.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval.

2201 Mount Vernon Street
N. E. Holland Hull, Owner/Applicant
DATE: c. 1860
PROPOSAL: Legalize new front windows and basement grills; new stair rail

This proposal calls for the legalization of new front windows and recently installed basement grates, and approval of an iron stair rail made to match the new grates. The applicant has not installed the stair rail. The owner installed wood, true-muntin, two-over-two windows on the second and third floors, and one-over-one windows on the first floor, all without a permit. This window configuration matches other, similar houses on the block, which retain their original windows. Ms. Batcheler remarked that the new muntins appear slightly wider than the originals, but conceded that painting them a dark color would mitigate the minor difference. Stephan White, architect for the proposal, stated that the owner intends to paint the windows dark green. Mr. Baron stated that the new windows do match the originals. Committee members found the new windows acceptable.

The owner installed wrought iron basement grates without a permit. These grates prove more ornate than the originals found on most buildings on the block. Mr. Tyler stated that he has seen several different kinds of basement grates on that block. Mr. Tyler acknowledged that most appear considerably less ornate, but recommended approving these new grates owing to the diversity of designs on this block. Ms. Batcheler thought the original design would suit the house better.

Although not yet installed, the owner also had a railing made for the front stoop. The houses on this block have various railings installed in many different years, but these rather simple railings appear more appropriate than the highly ornate one made for this building. Mr. Baron recommended the applicant

install a simple, but elegant pipe-style stair rail with the necessary number of balusters to meet code requirements. Mr. Levy suggested modifying the new railing by eliminating some of the decorative elements. Mr. Thomas noted that without the decorative pieces, this stair rail does not meet code.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the new windows. Four of the five members present voted to recommend approval of the new basement grates. Ms. Batcheler dissented. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend denial of the proposed stair rail.

Cotton Street Bridge, Manayunk Canal

City of Philadelphia, Owner

Daniel DiMucci, Applicant

DATE: c. 1950

PROPOSAL: Replace bridge

This proposal involves replacing a low-lying, flat bridge that carries Cotton Street over the Manayunk Canal with a new steel and wood camelback bridge with 4 feet 8 inches of headroom to allow rowers to pass underneath. Daniel DiMucci, architect for the project, stated that the bridge will incorporate lighting standards similar to those used by the Fairmount Park Commission and the Center City District. The design of the new bridge allows for pedestrian as well as vehicular traffic. This constitutes the first of several proposals the Historical Commission will review for the Manayunk Canal rehabilitation.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval.

23-29 North Juniper Street, City Hall Annex

Annex Center Limited Partnership, Owner

James Platt, Architect/Applicant

DATE: 1927

PROPOSAL: Porte-cochere, grade change, new openings on Commerce Street, door and stairs on Filbert Street

The architects have changed the porte-cochere slightly. They moved the angle of the projecting overhang to a less severe slope, raising the rear of the canopy above the decorative lanterns. This new design lines the rear portion of the canopy with a strong muntin line of the arched windows. James Platt, the architect, described plans to paint the porte-cochere a bronze color, and to use clear glass.

The proposal includes grade changes for the drive and drop-off around the North Juniper Street side of the building. Mr. Platt explained that Building Code requirements necessitate a gradual grade change that spans the width of the building. The graded levels at the corners of the building will remain the same. He also described plans to preserve the existing steps by simply covering them with the new materials.

The proposal also includes a double-bay loading dock and a single bay loading dock with roll-down doors, and four new pedestrian doors, all on Commerce Street. Mr. Levy recommended combining one of the pedestrian doors with the large, grated compactor entrance next to it, to avoid leaving the appearance of unsupported stone. Committee members wanted the new doors painted to match the stone base of the building. The proposed revolving door and stairs on Filbert Street will match the existing doors and stairs, and appear appropriate for the building. Plans involve replacing one door on the front facade with a window to match the materials and height of the old door.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the proposal, with the doors painted to match the stone base of building, and combining the compactor and pedestrian doors.

1003 Arch Street, Trocadero Theater

Mr. Pang, Owner

William Giesey, Applicant

DATE: 1872

PROPOSAL: Facade lighting

The owner wishes to install three up-light fixtures just above the building's first-floor cornice in non-historic brick below the second-floor windows. The owner wants to highlight the large and ornate second-floor windows. Ms. Batcheler suggested installing the lights within a wood sill, constructed to replace the missing stone sills under the second-floor windows. Myles Pettengill, contractor for the project, described plans to restore the first-floor cornice at some later date. The restoration may impact any sills placed beneath the windows. Mr. Baron asked the Committee to recommend approval of the original proposal. Committee members thought the applicant should consider their recommendations when purchasing the light fixtures so that they can install them within sill boxes as Ms. Batcheler suggested, should they decide to go adopt that option.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the proposal, with staff to review and approve details, and that the applicant consider light fixtures adaptable for installation into a wood sill box.

123-125 Chestnut Street, Corn Exchange Building

Peter Shaw and Allan Casnoff, Owners

Paul Curci, Applicant

DATE: 1900; 1913 addition

PROPOSAL: Banner and pole

This proposal calls for a new flag pole attached below a second story window of the four-story addition to the Corn Exchange on South 2nd Street, and a single, blue, oblong banner in canvas-type fabric to hang on the pole. Ms. Batcheler recommended moving the pole away from the decorative pediment

over the entrance. Ms. Pentz noted that the proposed location under a window would cause the banner to hang over a first-floor window, and asked the applicant to center the pole between two windows, so that the bottom of the banner will hang over a pier.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the banner and pole, centered between two windows, and attached to the building in mortar joints.

144 North 2nd Street

Borough Belsky, Owner

Patrick Dewey, Applicant

DATE: c. 1840

PROPOSAL: Awning and banner

The owner wishes to install a shed-type awning in the doorway of this restored Victorian storefront, using canvas-like material. The proposal also includes a banner to hang between the windows from the top of the third floor down to the top of the first-floor cornice. Mr. Baron pointed out that the owner would like to restore or rebuild the entire facade in the near future. Committee members did not object to the banner, but thought the awning would cover too much of this significant storefront, including decorative arch openings. Ms. Batcheler suggested painting signs in the windows for more recognition.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the banner, and to deny the awning proposal.

69-71 North 2nd Street

Daniel Dumoff, Owner/Applicant

DATE: c. 1850

PROPOSAL: Legalize signage

The owner seeks to legalize five flat wall signs that he installed without a permit, bringing the number of signs on the two visible facades of this building to seven. Committee members agreed that a few of the signs resemble earlier models that would have appeared on commercial buildings. However, others seem excessive and inappropriate to the historic character of the building and the area. Mr. Thomas noted the long commercial nature of this neighborhood. Ms. Batcheler recommended removing all of the signs except those that advertise the store's name. Committee members thought the owner or his designer should work with Commission Staff on a proposal. They regretted that no one appeared at the meeting to discuss the proposal.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend denial of the proposal based on the amount of signage, and the materials used, and to encourage the applicant to work with staff in designing a new signage scheme.

2021 Rittenhouse Square Street, a.k.a. 2020 Latimer Street

Frederick Kroon, Owner

Archangelo Guida, Architect/Applicant

DATE: c. 1890

PROPOSAL: Hang air conditioner off rear of building

The owner wishes to install an air-conditioning unit on a shelf at the rear of the property over the sidewalk on Latimer Street. Several houses face this block of Latimer Street, so the rear of this building constitutes a highly visible aspect of the street scape. Committee members discussed questions of unsightliness and noise. They thought only the rooftop air-conditioning units should remain.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend denial.

1710 Delancey Street

Margaret MacLaren Ulrich, Owner/Applicant

DATE: c. 1850

PROPOSAL: New shutter

This proposal involves replacement in kind of all the shutters on the front facade. The house currently has paneled shutters on all floors. The first-floor shutters have three panels that do not match the panel configuration of the original front door. Mr. Baron stated that the second- and third- floor windows have replacement shutters, as their strap locks lie above the meeting rail of the windows. Committee members informed the applicant that on appropriate shutters the horizontal rail and strap locks would fall below the meeting rails. Staff explained that the upper floors should have louvered shutters and the first floor should have shallow paneled shutters that follow the same configuration. Committee members did not object to the use of paneled shutters on all floors, with center rails in the proper location, painted with an opaque stain. The applicant stated that she will use a cream or off white opaque stain. Ms. Batcheler advised Ms. MacLaren Ulrich, the owner, to cover the shutter tops with metal flashing to minimize water seepage, painted the color of the shutter

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of paneled shutters on all floors, with center rails in the proper location, painted with an opaque stain, with retention of all hardware.

1521 Spruce Street

Livia Salandria Corman, Owner/Applicant

DATE: 1870

PROPOSAL: Storefront lighting

This proposal entails the installation of lighting along the frames of the first-floor windows. Lumisphere lighting, the proposed fixture, has clear, spherical bulbs, about two-and-one-half inches in diameter, connected by a black wire. Livia

Corman, the applicant, stated that she will keep the lights dimmed, and that the conduit and transformer will remain hidden in the ceiling. Committee members recommended installing the lights inside the windows to avoid creating a facade intrusion. Mr. Levy suggested installing light strips with smaller bulbs. Ms. Corman preferred to stay with her original proposal. She described the method of installation, and noted that the clips that support the lights will cause minimal damage to the frames, which are not original. The fixtures require only one small opening for electrical wires. Mr. Levy asked the applicant to demonstrate the appearance of the lights, and offered to visit the site that day.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval, with staff or Mr. Levy to inspect a sample and review spacing details.

Mr. Levy reported that he inspected the lights and recommended spacing the bulbs on six inch centers, and dimmed considerably.

1901-1905 Walnut Street, Rittenhouse Plaza

Paul and Linda Richardson, Owners

Wesley Wei, Architect/Applicant

DATE: 1926

PROPOSAL: Remove stained glass windows, install new aluminum windows and custom wood door at top floors

Mr. Thomas recused himself from the discussion and the vote owing to his involvement in the building's window project.

The new owners of this penthouse apartment want to remove several non-original stained glass windows and install new aluminum windows and wood doors. A previous owner of this apartment installed stained and leaded glass windows in the 1930s or 1940s. They have deteriorated and the present owners expect to replace most of the windows with clear glass. Linda and Paul Richardson, the owners of the apartment, explained their reasons for removing the stained glass, and their intention to donate the removed sections to LaSalle University. They want to retain the stained glass windows in the library.

The manager of the entire building expects to replace all of the building's wood windows with aluminum windows in the near future. The Richardsons cannot wait for the windows planned for the rest of the building, as they must move in by the end of March. They seek approval from the Commission for slightly modified window treatments, which lack the proper putty slope that the new windows will have for the rest of the building. The proposal involves leaving the window frames exposed for now to await whatever panning detail the Historical Commission approves. Mr. Levy stated that he visited the site to evaluate the visibility, and attested to the near invisibility of the top two floors of this building from ground level. Committee members thought the terra-cotta band and various balconies sufficiently

demarcate the top floors obviating the need to match exactly the windows with those on the rest of the building.

Four of the five Committee members present voted to recommend approval. Mr. Thomas recused himself.

2433 Pine Street

Robin Kohles, Owner/Architect/Applicant

DATE: c. 1875

PROPOSAL: Demolish first floor of existing bay; new rear fence

The owner wants to demolish the first floor of the existing rear bay and support the remaining second-floor bay with posts, exposing the original rear wall. The proposal also calls for the installation of a wood, paired, double-hung window and a door on the first-floor rear. The owners wish to replace a non-historic cinderblock fence with a new wood fence along 25th Street and the alley. Committee members did not object.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval.

310 Delancey Street

Sherry LeFevre, Owner

Arlene Matzkin, Architect/Applicant

DATE: c. 1785

PROPOSAL: Addition on rear ell; new windows in former party wall

This proposal involves expanding this house to accommodate the joining of two families. It includes a third-story addition on the rear ell, and cutting new windows into a former party wall. This house sits next to a modern walkway, rendering the rear portion highly visible. The proposed wood, six-over-six, true-muntin windows will require the removal of non-historic brick from the redevelopment period. Ms. Batcheler noted the inevitable loss of some historic fabric from behind the brick.

The owner wishes to add a third story to the rear ell to accommodate a bedroom, small study, and a bathroom. The addition will require the removal of the rear dormer on the main house and the entire roof of the rear ell. Committee members thought the addition significantly changed the appearance of the rear, and suggested alternate ways to provide the needed space. One recommendation involved building a similar suite of rooms in the basement, and creating an areaway in the garden to provide light. Arlene Matzkin, architect for the proposal, stated that she will ask the owner to consider the basement plan.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend denial of the proposal, based on the loss of historic fabric and the inappropriate appearance of the rear addition.

1115-1131 Market Street, Reading Terminal Headhouse

Reading Terminal Headhouse Association, L.P., Owner

Philip Scott, Architect/Applicant

DATE: 1893

PROPOSAL: Cornice replacement; storefront alterations on Market and Filbert Streets; door and window and architectural detail replacement the in loggia

The previous owner of the building removed the original pressed-copper cornice and terra-cotta balustrade. This proposal calls for replacing the cornice with a simpler pressed metal cornice. The proposed cornice will project three feet, which is smaller than the original. The new cornice incorporates simplified brackets that follow the original shape, but without the acanthus leaf decoration. The metal of the cornice will extend up along the parapet wall.

Ms. Batcheler remarked on the largeness of the remaining pieces of the original cornice, such as the modillions, and how the new cornice will not fit the scale of those elements. Miguel Fernandez, an architect for the project, explained that window washing considerations necessitated tapering down the cornice. Mr. Fernandez stated that presently window washers work from an apparatus suspended from the roof with heavy cables. Extending the cornice out farther than three feet will not allow the window washers to get close enough to the building. Mr. Baron asked about an earlier scheme that involved running the cables through holes in the cornice. The architects rejected that alternative because the holes would become funnels for water drainage onto the facade. Committee members preferred abandoning the cornice proposal over installing a diminutive cornice on this building.

The Commission already approved the storefront application in concept. The storefronts along 12th Street at the original opening for Commence Street will have the same configuration as others along 12th Street. The proposal also includes the installation of two more air-intake vents for the Red Bell Brewery. The storefronts at the east end of Market Street follow plans that the Commission approved in concept.

The proposal also calls for replacing the windows and doors leading from the ballroom onto the loggia. This configuration of openings came from an historic photograph. Mr. Fernandez explained that this aspect of the proposal also includes the replacement in cast stone of the columns, spandrels, and the now-missing stone bands and carved details near the doors.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of storefront replacements on 12th and Market Streets, and the window, door, and stone detail replacements in the loggia. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend denial of the cornice.

Respectfully submitted,

R. Scott Jacob